

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 594
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH
:AMEMBASSY LONDON 2330
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 6689

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, SHUM, PINT, CG

SUBJECT: REFUGEE AMNESTY LAW APPROVED BY LEGISLATURE

REF: KINSHASA 6603

1. SUMMARY: ZAIRE'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PASSED LAW ON AMNESTY FOR
ZAIRIAN REFUGEES AFTER ATTEMPTING TO AMEND TEXT SUBMITTED BY MOBUTU IN

ORDER TO EXTEND AMNESTY TO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ZAIRE. LOCAL
UNHCR OFFICIAL HAS ASSURED GOZ OF HIS ORGANIZATION'S READINESS TO
COOPERATE. END SUMMARY.

2. ZAIRE'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MET JUNE 24-25 IN SPECIAL SESSION TO
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DEBATE AND PASS LAW ON REFUGEE AMNESTY SUBMITTED BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU
FOLLOWING HIS SPEECH AT KINKOLE JUNE 24 (REFTEL). AS REPORTED
REFTEL, MOBUTU'S SPEECH WAS AMBIGUOUS ON QUESTION OF WHETHER AMNESTY
OFFER APPLIED TO ZAIRIAN REFUGEES/EXILES EVERYWHERE, OR ONLY TO THOSE
IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO ZAIRIAN PRESS REPORTS,
DEPUTIES SOUGHT TO GO BEYOND MOST GENEROUS INTERPRETATION OF MOBUTU'S
REMARKS BY ENLARGING SCOPE OF LAW TO ENCOMPASS ALL ZAIRIANS WHO HAVE

BEEN CONVICTED OF A POLITICAL OFFENSE, WHETHER LIVING ABROAD OR IMPRISONED IN ZAIRE. DEPUTIES REPORTEDLY WERE FINALLY PERSUADED TO LIMIT SCOPE OF LAW TO ALL ZAIRIANS LIVING ABROAD. IN EXCHANGE, EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE KENGO WA DONDO AGREED TO INFORM MOBUTU OF DEPUTIES' DESIRE TO SEE PROMULGATED A SIMILAR AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ZAIRE.

3. UNHCR OFFICER GOLDBERG TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 26 THAT HE HAD BEEN CONTACTED BY GOZ OFFICIALS SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE KINKOLE SPEECH ON MATTER OF UNHCR ROLE IN REPATRIATING ZAIRIAN REFUGEES. GOLDBERG ASSURED GOZ THAT UNHCR WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE AND OUTLINED REPATRIATION PROCEDURES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ALL GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED HAD TO AGREE TO REQUEST UNHCR PARTICIPATION BEFORE THAT ORGANIZATION COULD ACT.

4. COMMENT: ATTEMPT BY LEGISLATORS TO EXTEND AMNESTY TO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ZAIRE APPARENTLY REFLECTS CONVICTION, VOICED PRIVATELY TO US BY SEVERAL DEPUTIES PRIOR TO KINKOLE SPEECH, THAT ANYTHING LESS WOULD PROVE INSUFFICIENT TO LAUNCH THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, ZAIRE SERIOUSLY NEEDS. MOST PROMINENT BENEFICIARY OF INTERNAL AMNESTY,

OF COURSE, WOULD BE FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA.
CUTLER

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